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FLOOR DEBATE

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statistics on this is that we do have currently a system of valuing agricultural land that purports to be based upon sales, sales of property for agricultural purposes, be that the grazing of cattle, the raising of crops, the raising of carrots or whatever that...that might be. And the demand for...of many people for land that doesn't have houses on it is for aesthetic values, for hunting values, and it's purchased for those purposes but left in agricultural use. Very hard to distinguish, but those sales become part of our valuation system. The reason I mention that is that statewide, if you looked at only one sector, that of grassland, which tends to be more scenic, more eye pleasing, more tilted toward hunting or fishing or whatever else there might be, more suitable for a vacation home site, you'll find that those properties, in all 93 counties, are valued at 2 to 3 to 4 times what their worth is for the other use, which is grazing of livestock. It's a good indicator, I think, that our current system is broken. We have a number of counties that have been attempting to greenbelt, but to do that you have to find land that has sold for agricultural purposes in your county, or in the adjoining counties. Getting to be quite a difficult search. Were I to be a person of money, and I could find an attorney who understood the valuation systems, I believe that a suit challenging the constitutionality of our current system would be quite appropriate. The constitution says two things: one, that agricultural and horticultural property shall be valued upon its...its value for agricultural and horticultural purposes; and the other says that agricultural and horticultural land may constitute a separate class of property not uniform with other...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR COORDSEN: ...classes of property, but uniform and proportionate within itself. This is why multiple clap (sic--class) rates don't work, or any of the other things. I do not believe we have a system today that is defensible, because in most counties, if in fact are resulting in values that are two or three times greater than what its agricultural and horticultural value is, that result is, in fact, unconstitutional. Thank you, Mr. President.